

FACT SHEET

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Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services

Program Description

The Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services (OVSRS) provides advocacy services as well as supports rehabilitative opportunities for offenders. Specifically, the OVSRS maintains a comprehensive victim services program and supports justice practices to ensure offender rehabilitation and accountability to victims, the community, and to themselves.

Program Accomplishments (2004-2007)

Maximize Restitution Collection from Inmates Under State & Federal Law

- The necessary changes were made to begin an increase in restitution garnishment from inmates from 40 percent to 50 percent in 2007; 50 percent is the legal maximum under state and federal law, and is consistent with the collection rate in youth facilities. This change will result in an approximate 17 percent overall increase in the CDCR restitution collections and result in better service to victims with direct orders, as well as a slight increase in overall restitution collections.

Activate Collection on All Victims' Direct Orders of Restitution

- Under state law prior to 2007, a victim had to file an additional written claim with the CDCR before collection could be made on the court order payable directly to the victim. Only 19 percent of victims filed the request. Effective January 2007, a change in state law provides for immediate activation of all victim direct order accounts. All procedural, technological, and practical changes are in place to implement this change

Initiate Restitution Collections at CDCR Reception Centers

- Prior to March 2007, restitution collection from inmates did not begin until inmates moved from the reception centers to their assigned prison. To enhance collection efforts, the CDCR staff in Case Records, Accounting, and the OVSRS changed business processes to begin collections at all reception centers, effective March 1, 2007.
- A \$1-2 million annual increase in CDCR collections is now expected. It benefits restitution collection at Community Correctional Facilities (CCF) and for the Victim Compensation & Government Claims Program's post discharge Franchise Tax restitution collection program.

(more)

Parole Restitution Collection Program – Substantial Improvements

- In October 2006, the CDCR Division of Adult Parole Operations, in cooperation with various support offices and the OVSRS, began a comprehensive, far-reaching upgrade to its restitution collection program. All parole agents have complete restitution account information available.

Under the new program, reporting parolees are served with notice of their restitution obligations, their agents' payment expectations, that the parolees' payment performance will be taken into consideration when release from parole is considered at annual review, and that if the parolees' performance is inadequate, their account will be referred to the Franchise Tax Board for collection.

This change is expected to increase CDCR collections, estimated at 5 to 15 percent overall over the next 2-3 years. In addition, it effectively addresses a criticism of the CDCR's restitution collection program in a way that is efficient, cost effective, and does not detract from the agents' public safety duties. During 2006 the CDCR began including provisions requiring restitution collection in new CCF contracts, including the out-of-state facilities.

Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) Handbook For Adult Lifer Hearings

- The OVSRS Victims Services Coordinator at the Board of Prison Hearings completed a handbook explaining processes for victims and survivors who attend lifer parole hearings. The handbooks are now distributed statewide with the intent to educate those involved in lifer hearings.

OVSRS Staff Involvement in Federal Grant

- The OVSRS staff coordinated the administration of a \$200,000 federal grant to develop and implement a victim impact curriculum for correctional agencies nationwide. Pilot sites included Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, San Quentin State Prison, and the Heman G. Stark Youth Correctional Facility. The grant product is a standardized victim impact curriculum to be used in California's adult and juvenile facilities.

Victim Services Call Center Established

- In January 2006 the OVSRS set up a call center to help the OVSRS staff to better assist victims, next of kin, and the public with answers to their questions. The call center allows a staff member to answer calls during weekday business hours. After regular working hours, the call center also allows the caller to leave a detailed message so that staff can return the call during the core hours. The call center has enabled the OVSRS staff to track data on the number of phone-calls received. The OVSRS staff will review and incorporate new software into the existing system to further enhance the utilization of data produced by the system.